Wolfgang Bender

MUSIC FROM AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN EUROPE

When writing about the music of African immigrants in Europe, one must first admit that it would be futile to try to provide a complete picture.

It is necessary to offer an advance statement: African musicians and singers have contributed immensely to the musical culture of Europe. Since their first arrival in Europe, be it with the early folkloric show groups at world exhibitions in colonial times, until the beginning of the 21st century, much of it has gone unnoticed, while some of it has become known. A lot remains to be done to fully acknowledge this contribution.

Even if it were possible, there has been no attempt at a complete survey of African music in Europe. Were such a survey to be undertaken, it would only be possible to draw an incomplete picture, or provide certain diverging pictures of the composition of music by African immigrants. Whether they live for a period of their lives or their whole life in Europe, we shall see that the most important difference among the African musicians and singers in Europe is whether they see themselves as part of their host societies, or whether they continue to feel part of the 'original' society which they have left.

Musicians and singers may live in Europe for years and never relate very much to the European public while continuing to be creative despite being away from home. In contrast, others try to open up towards the local population, educating them, or at least trying to please them by detecting their expectations and consequently trying to meet them. These two basic differences allow us to categorise most of the practising artists. Of additional importance are their reasons for having come to Europe in the first place. These depend on historical and political conditions at home and in Europe. For many years – and even up to today – the colonial past was a decisive factor for a positive or negative choice when deciding to migrate to a particular European state.

THE DISCOURSE OF 'BLACKNESS'

Another initial observation must be made: there are immigrants who are musicians before they arrive in Europe, and there are those who become musicians on their arrival or after.

Some of the contributors to the publication *Musiques Migrantes* by Laurent Aubert from Geneva, Djamchid Chemirani, a musician from Iran, arrived in France in 1961. About his training he remarks: "Né en 1942 à Téhéran, j´ai commencé l´apprentissage du *zarb* dès l´âge de huit ans chez le plus grand maître de cet instrument, Hosein Teherani" (Chemirani 2005: 79).

Musicians like him contribute with their knowledge and their basic training to the enrichment of our culture. A different matter altogether are the migrants, who might already indeed have had an inkling towards music in their own country, but might not really have been professionally active in this field. Others again might not even have been all that interested in musical practice at home, but on their arrival chose music as their means of survival.

As musicians create their own public image according to economic demands, it is not always easy to know the truth of a particular musician's biography. The aim of this article is not to investigate false or adapted CVs but from an academic point of view, the formulation of myths and the creation of images to achieve particular ends are of significant interest. For example, an immigrant who wants to make a living by teaching how to play a *djembe* drum may not voluntarily admit that he never touched that instrument before coming to Germany; he may therefore create a fictitious story of his musical past at home. In this way he will definitely meet the expectations of the German lovers of African music. Moreover, it might even fit the conceptions or images many Germans have of Africans, who supposedly all 'have music in their blood' – which is in fact a racist prejudice and not far from a fascist ideology, in 'blood and soil' terms of Nazi-Germany. This concept proceeds even further: a German person may become a drummer through talent and learning, but an immigrant from Africa is seen somehow as a 'natural carrier of rhythm'. That again is connected to prejudices and expectations toward the 'other'.

Another contributor to *Musiques Migrantes*, Vincent Zanetti, comments on this attitude:

> […] Les enfants africains ne naissent pas avec le sens du rythme; ils ont simplement plus de chance de l´acquérir dès leur plus jeune âge, dans la mesure où ils baignent dans des cultures musicales particulièrement riche en polyrythmies. (Zanetti 2005: 96)

The next general assertion we must address is the term 'African'. Nowadays, it is a common notion that there is something like 'African' music from north to south or at least south of the Sahara. Anyone opposed to the idea of unity in African music is quickly tagged as somebody who wants to divide Africans: 'divide et impera' in the colonial tradition. This again is an argument one cannot argue against with rational thoughts. My experience is that if you do not acknowledge a common 'Africanness' or even worse, a 'Blackness', you may raise arguments that are quite surprising. Instead of appreciating the variety and the diversity of the African continental cultures, you will be told of a fictitious 'oneness', like the doctrines of the Rastafarian belief system. These and similar reactions seem – from a European point of view – somewhat awkward. According to my personal experiences if you ask an African migrant musician where he or she is from, you might receive an answer, but if you ask where this and that music originates from, the answer will simply be: "it's African". If you insist, you might succeed in getting an answer such as "it's West African". In this case, one gets the impression to have asked something the musician or singer does not know. The appropriation might have only taken place after their arrival in Europe. The answer "African" or "West African" is a truthful reply, insomuch as it is music circulating among Africans or West Africans. In Europe, it has no name, and at home it might not exist in that particular form. It is not a lie after all but the recognition of its missing roots, a music as rootless as the immigrants themselves living in the 'diaspora'. This discourse is not all that easy to practise with immigrants unless there is a strong rapport and enough self-confidence involved.

THE ADAPTATION OF MISTAKES

Quite an amazing phenomenon with immigrant musicians is that they adopt the fallacies of the learned ethnomusicologists, such as the false terms for African musical instruments. For example, the usage of the name for the Shona lamellophone *mbira* for all sorts of other lamellophones throughout the continent is now obsolete. They might appear similar but usually are of a totally different nature, each belonging to its particular musical culture and sound system.

This happens with a number of other musical instruments as well. It also applies to the names a musician may have in a specific culture. The term *griot*, for example, is called *jali* etc., in the Mandingo and related cultures in the Sahel region of West Africa. For a discussion on the usage of the terms griot and jali see Hale (1998).

In Paris, we may read of a griot from Gabon performing on a given evening. This is most likely to be a musician and singer from Gabon who has heard that in Paris musicians from West Africa are termed griot, although he is not a griot in the strict sense of the word, as the griot in the Mandingo region is part of a specific culture, history, and society. There is a way to find out if he is really a descendent of a griot family, as there are only a few families whose names are known.

Today, not all the offspring of a griot family will become griots. Only those who prove talented receive further education. Today, children are supposed to go to school to receive a modern formal training. This means for the griot student less or no time to learn the knowledge needed to perform functionally and well.

THE DEMANDS OF THE AUDIENCE

There has always been a tendency on the part of European consumers of African music to appreciate acoustic instrumentation as more 'African' than electrically amplified or electronic sound. Again, African immigrant musicians adapt to this preference of the audience, which depends on the size of the African community in the area. In France, in particular in Paris, African musicians and singers have the opportunity to perform in front of an entirely African public (i.e. a regional fixed selection audience, such as an exclusively Cameroonian, Zairian, from the Ivory Coast etc. is therefore not an 'African' public).

Fig. 1 – The singer and bandleader Amakye Dede from Ghana with his band "the Apollo Highkings" at the hall of the Fachhochschule in Frankfurt a. M. 1991.
Photo by Wolfgang Bender

AFRICANS FOR AFRICANS

In Germany, the situation is somewhat different. The African communities are not as large and not so many orchestras have chosen to live and work here. Therefore, it is more common for orchestras to be invited to tour those places frequented by a specific, local African community. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ghanaians would regularly come to concerts organised by Ghanaians themselves in the *Aula der Fachhochschule in der Nordweststadt* (Frankfurt am Main). All the famous groups performed there one after the other. The German public was not informed, nor would it have attended anyhow, as Ghanaian artists were totally unknown in Germany. I once personally tried to bridge the gap between the Ghanaian community and the Hessen regional public by announcing a concert by the former top star Amakye Dede in a TV weekly cultural announcement programme, the *Kulturkalender* (24th March 1991, Apollo Highkings of Ghana, 2.30) of the *Hessischer Rundfunk, Fernsehen*. However it seems to have had no effect on the constellation of the audience.

This may lead to the conclusion that immigrant communities often occupy a completely separate cultural, musical, and entertainment sphere. They rarely mix, having one goal: To enjoy dancing to the music that they regard as their own, and which they love. In general, this music has no place in Germany's public TV or radio stations. *Radio-Multikulti* in Berlin used to offer a programme of music from all over the world but it was closed down at the end of 2008.

This again is different in France where you have different radio stations playing African music. There is Africa No. 1, an FM station, the main operation of which is in Libreville, Gabon, although there is a Paris studio. There are also radio stations in Britain, which regularly play African music. In Portugal, you have African music on TV and radio, *RTP-Africa*.

WORLD MUSIC SPOTS

This is even more startling if you look at the attendance of African music concerts in the so-called 'world music spots' in Germany, such as the *Brotfabrik* in Frankfurt, the *Raschplatz Pavillion* in Hannover, die *Markthalle* in Hamburg, etc. There you may watch the reverse situation!

The famous Boubacar Traoré from Mali might perform but Malian immigrants will not be there in large numbers. This is a German event for a German public – and the entry price is too costly. Perhaps this is a little bit different in Britain and France where more middle class Africans can afford to pay expensive entrance fees.

The Eritreans as well as the Ethiopians often host their own stars to full houses with people coming to a Frankfurt suburb from as far as Stuttgart or Kassel, a journey of hundreds of kilometres. Hardly any Europeans or Germans are present.

The German audience is hardly interested in Ethiopian or Eritrean music. Therefore, the people from these countries meet among themselves on these occasions. I went to one of the regular events of Aster Aweke, a well-known United States-based Ethiopian singer. No other European guests were present; nor is it likely that there were guests from other parts of Africa.

Fig. 2 – Maio Coope from Guinea Bissao performs together with diverse musicians at all sorts of events in Portugal and all over Europe. In Lisbon he had a small gig at a support organisation in 2007. Here the poster inviting for the evening.

Photo by Wolfgang Bender

Fig. 3 – The singer Cesaria Evora from the Cape Verdian islands is announced here on posters in Lisbon in 1999. The posters were put up on purpose across the multi-story market building, highly frequented by African migrants.

Photo by Wolfgang Bender

In Lisbon however, the situation is slightly different. For example, a group such as Maio Coope & Co. from Guinea Bissao gave a performance on 10th October 2005 at the premises of *Solidariedade Imigrante* [assistance office]. Who was present? The musicians brought a few old friends, themselves musicians, and a few Portuguese NGO staff. Mozambique students from one of the Lisbon universities performed in a club along the Tejo. Who was present then? Only other students from Lisbon of mixed colour.

In Lisbon there are also clubs such as the 'En-clave' formerly from Bana, but currently run by Tito Paris from the Cape Verde islands. There, people from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds mix. Recently a 'Casa da Morna' opened. Tito Paris does steer it towards an international audience.

AFRICAN EXILE MUSICIANS AND THEIR AUDIENCES

African musicians and singers in exile usually have a different public to themselves, showing a different picture of their 'country of origin', to use that phrase from the 'immigration card' of so many African countries.

When Fela Anikulapo-Kuti came to Germany for the first time to perform at the Berlin Jazz Festival in 1978 at the most prestigious hall available then, the *Berlin Philharmonic*, he spiced up his performance with a lot of necessary political background information, much to the dislike of the ignorant majority of the audience, a purist jazz crowd, who did not expect to be taught in a pedantic fashion. Somebody shouted, "We don't want politics, we want music!" – to Fela Kuti, who in a unique way fused politics with music, as politics was essential to his music!

Later on the same evening, in the *Quartier Latin*, the famous exile orchestra from Guinea (Conakry), Africa Djolé, then residing in Holland, gave a performance of their Mandingo jazz construct to a mesmerised public.

Fodé Youla and his men (Fodé Camara, Ségou Camara, Kaloga Traoré) knew very well what jazz fans liked. They presented nothing other than the current repertoire of the region in a way that engulfed the people present. Intensive solos on the djembe (on the cover the djembe was not even called that; it was subsumed under tam-tam, SAJ-19), with a constant percussive web background. One still can listen to the recordings, even live, on the jazz label *fmp – free music production* (SAJ-19, 1978; SAJ-48, 1984). They even sang their version of the *Taxi Driver* song that made Bobby Benson famous in Nigeria of the 1950s. Harmonica sound mixed with the *gongoma* (the large lamellophone), metal percussion, whistle and additional drums (SAJ-19).

It was the arrangement that worked. It was intensive and driving, as well as minimal in a sense. The audience, almost all European, with a few men from Africa as well, was in for 'authentic sound' – whatever this might really be. Measuring the degree of authenticity in an absolute way, a version of the *Highlife* evergreen *Taxi Driver* – recorded on Philips in the early 50s on a shellac 78 rpm initially – will end negatively, but then, who knew the *Taxi Driver* song in Berlin 1978?

The success story of Africa Djolé is a good example of how an exile group of musicians can capture a market segment in a new performance environment. I suppose that in this case, all members were professional artists before their arrival in Europe.

I am sure it was their professionalism which made them choose the right compositions, the right arrangements, and the right choice of instruments. Interestingly enough, they made no reference whatsoever to their situation as exiles, at least not in a way easily recognisable to non-Guineans. They did not try to educate the public about the dictatorship of President Sekou Touré of Guinea, the reason for their leaving. I assume they thought that this might shed negative vibes on their music and bring in unpleasant 'undertones', whereas the audience wanted an unspoilt experience of Africa: Exotic sounds unspoiled by politics.

AGITATING PERFORMANCES

In radical contrast to Africa Djolé or their later offspring, Fatala, the South African exile bands usually chose the path of agitation. With this they as well were pretty successful. Africa Djolé was resident in The Netherlands – at the time a more liberal-minded European society and state. The group *Jabula* visited Amsterdam, but according to the *Jabula* label address, lived in England.

From there they toured Europe. Their lyrics were mostly propaganda songs, or at least trying to relate to the situation at home. The East German supported West German publishing house *pläne* from Dortmund edited the LP *Jabula – African Soul pläne* 88154, 1979. It was in fact the licensed LP of the original *Jabula in Amsterdam* JBL 2003.

It had an inside extra-sheet the size of the LP to provide political and historical information, and on the flip side some of the song texts in English and German translations. The first song on that LP is *Afrika* [sic!] *awake*. Part of the lyrics said:

We want power for the people, in this hour
We will stand for the people, for our land

Together we
Will be free
Time to fight
For our right
Not far away,
Freedom Day.

Throughout the lyrics is a political message, and Julian Sebothane Bahula, the bandleader, intended to use music to teach and to ask for solidarity in the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

There was a kind of setup in a number of smaller groups that became a common practice: You start off with 'traditional dances', raffia skirts and all that, to satisfy the European longing for an exotic Africa. It was to demonstrate the existence of their own cultural heritage and to express pride. Then, in a second part of the evening, the same people would get on stage with electric amplified instruments and a singer, male or female, that sang political statements to dance to. The favourable public appreciated both sections. The relationship with the people in the audience was cordial and supportive. There was a common ground of international solidarity in the struggle against Apartheid. It was not so much the quality of the music that counted as much as it was the right position you had to adhere to. The musicians might not always have been professionals, but that was not the issue: it was the struggle that mattered.

Others coming out of South Africa were professional musicians: Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa, and Dollar Brand (who was later to become Abdullah Ibrahim).

Dollar Brand lived in New York and in Europe from the 1960s onward, travelling annually throughout Europe, giving all kinds of performances: solos, duos, trios, quartets and even a revolutionary opera, the Kalahari Liberation Opera, to support the struggle of his people at home. Unfortunately, the opera was more like a superficial piece of propaganda and missed the depth of his usual musical products.

His presence alone was usually political enough in the first place, so that it was not really necessary for him to subscribe to shallow propaganda. His music was an expression of the situation in which he found himself, and of how he saw the situation of his home country. For the period of the 1970s and 1980s, he was a very important figure in the anti-Apartheid struggle when Apartheid politics were still rampant. Dollar Brand was a musician with the Manhattan Brothers in South Africa, playing dance music for the African population. The style was partially called 'African jazz', but was dance music first and foremost. In exile, he became a jazz musician here in Europe. His recipe was to transform popular dance tunes from 1950s

South African *kwela* dance music into jazz arrangements. He did it very well indeed, as in *African Marketplace* (ELK 52217). The trick, or the way it worked was that the European or American public did not know the popular tunes and totally regarded the compositions of Dollar Brand as his own creations. Dollar Brand on the other hand did not provide copyright references, playing with the ignorance of the listeners. As a matter of fact, not all of Dollar Brand's recordings contain *kwela* arrangements and sound as if the compositions were 'original'. One can observe that life in the host country dramatically changes the migrant musician as well.

Whereas Dollar Brand resided in New York and went on European tours, South African sax player Dudu Pukwana stayed in London. In London during the 1970s and 1980s it was possible to watch and hear him play at the *100 Club* on Oxford Street. He simply played and it was his playing that expressed his political stand against the Apartheid regime. One of the many LPs that carried his music with his band *Zila*, *Live at the 100 Club* (London, 16th January 1981) includes the voice of the female exile-singer Peggy Phango (Wilmer 1981).

Miriam Makeba became the best-known singer exiled from South Africa. She did not intentionally leave South Africa to run away: She was invited by Lionel Rogosin, the *cinema verité* director from the United States, who featured her with two beautiful songs in the anti-Apartheid film *Come Back Africa* in 1959.

Makeba lived initially in the United States, and was then forced to leave the 'free world', as she was ostracised, banned from performing, after marrying Black Power militant Stokely Carmichael.

The dictator and music lover, President Sekou Touré from Guinea, offered her refuge in Conakry. Later she lived more or less in Europe (in Belgium – and carried a French passport), where she had her main public and went regularly on tour. Again, Makeba was not political in every song or statement. She was a kind of cultural ambassador for the black South Africans.

A completely different kind of exile are those who have at one point or another cooperated with a particular regime, that has been overturned by a coup d´etat. The duo *Ouro Negro of Angola* (Raúl Indipwo, Milo MacMahon) allowed the Portuguese colonial fascist regime to use them as a showpiece for their successful colonial policy. The duo travelled throughout the world but when independence arrived, they had to seek exile in Lisbon. Raúl Indipwo later ran a foundation there and lived off the royalties of his many published recordings. The duo *Ouro Negro* played any kind of music. They knew all of the current pop songs, and additionally they played their Angolan tunes.

Seigneur Rochereau Tabu Ley, one of the surviving stars of the most famous Congolese music from the 1960s, left crumbling Zaire to live in

Paris during the final years (end of 1990s) of Marshall Mobutu Sese Seko. Instead of being proud to host such a high-class singer and bandleader, the French immigration authorities did not renew his permit of residence and Tabu Ley had to leave for the United States instead, before returning home to serve the Kabilas in politics. In 2005, he became vice-president of the Kinshasa region (Mazzoleni 2008: 133). As to his music, it remained the *soukous* but it always depends on the musicians available.

THE 'SMALL' VERSUS THE 'GIANTS'

There is another categorical difference: There are a few 'high-class' international orchestras and/or singers, and then there are many small bands of mainly local importance, Makeba on the one hand, and Audrey Motaung from Hamburg on the other.

Audrey Motaung had to do additional work in order to survive. This does not include a judgement about the quality of the music itself, though it does have an economic aspect.

THE BIG EFFECT OF THE LITTLE ...

The many 'little' bands have over the years probably had a far greater effect on the European audience than the performances of 'outstanding' international stars. Through the regular and intensive hard work of many of these musicians and singers, African music has become part of the musical culture all over Europe. Nowadays, there is no city or even small town where there an African drum workshop or dance weekend is not on offer. African music is everywhere.

THE PRESENCE OF THE DJEMBE

European instrument shops – not only specialised African or World Music shops – offer djembe drums besides pianos or trumpets. Djembe are even produced in Europe now. The djembe – originally from Guinea Mandingo Malinke region – has spread throughout West Africa, and now East Africa, even all over the globe. There are djembe drums in Australia and in Latin America. In the United States, the djembe is everywhere as well. People do not even ask where it is from as it has become the African drum par excellence. When it is manufactured in Ghana, it might carry a symbolic sign indicating its origin.

During the 1990s, the company Afroton in Frankfurt am Main sold over a thousand per year. At that time, they were built in Senegal.

The globalisation of this instrument is an incredible phenomenon. But on its way to world-wide recognition, the djembe was deprived of one of its characteristic parts. The djembe in Guinea – when played by a master soloist – possesses at least three metal resonators fixed around the drumhead, and these metal rings tingle with every beat on the drum, producing a kind of snare effect. The so-called 'ears' of the djembe have disappeared – nowadays, most drummers do not even know of their existence. How are we to explain the success of this instrument?

Katja Luft, formerly one of our students at the African Music Archive in Mainz, undertook an inquiry with me in the mid 1990s into the usage of the djembe. We went to a regular course in West African drumming in Wiesbaden-Biebrich. There, she recorded various sessions on video, and we watched the participants in class and also conducted interviews[1].

A very clear indication of our investigation was that the participants, mostly women, preferred the djembe to other African instruments simply because of the noise it produces with relative little physical exertion. It was obvious that the women used drumming as a kind of psychological tool to increase their self-consciousness. In general, they were not interested at all in the specific cultural context or content of the music.

THE REDUCTION OF AFRICAN MUSIC TO DRUMMING

The overwhelming presence of the djembe, almost the only instrument offered for anybody interested in learning to play African instruments, has resulted in the exclusion of all the other instruments. In the 1980s, when I registered for a gongoma workshop announced by the Guinean group *Fatala* at the *Batschkapp* in Frankfurt am Main, one could also enroll for a workshop in djembe drumming. No one else had booked the gongoma! The fans of the djembe, I am quite sure, had probably never heard of the gongoma before. That fairly large box-lamellophone from Guinea, used mainly for accompaniment, usually has four metal lamellae and sounds terrific.

But where in Europe are all the workshops in African string instruments? Where are all the workshops in aerophones? The drum is about all that is

1 The lecture in which I presented the results of this short research at the Hochschule für Musik Würzburg was titled: *Djembe Ger-Mania*: Zur Rezeption afrikanischer Musik in Deutschland (27th May 1995) – to highlight the manic character of djembe playing.

present in people's heads as being African, and worth learning. This Africa-drum association is a kind of obsession.

Why are there are no *kora* workshops all around the continent? In Britain, I remember, the situation was a bit more hopeful. In London, kora workshops were offered at different places. In Lisbon, Domingo Morais organised kora learning at schools in the 1990s and the early 2000s – there is a Mandingo population in Lusophone Guinea Bissao.

If drumming has such a high status, why then only the djembe? The Yoruba *dundun* drums, or the *gangan*, the tension-drums are among the most highly sophisticated instruments in the world. With this drum, the percussionist may imitate the Yoruba speech melody and thus come very near actual speaking – hence its popular name, the 'talking drum'! Perhaps the playing of that drum is too demanding for the general Afrophile public? Which again would strengthen the general assumption, African is simple, and if it is too complicated, it is not accepted as African …

COLONIAL EXHIBITIONS

Music from African immigrants in Europe has a longer history than is usually assumed.

In the 19th century, musicians and singers were part of *Völkerschauen* – exhibitions of exotic people – in Germany and generally in Europe in the framework of colonial exhibitions, as people from Africa were known for a long time in large cities like Paris, Berlin, London and Brussels. These exhibitions took often place in zoos, although according to more recent literature, with Africans the show took place literally everywhere and was a regular part of entertainment, be it in a dance hall, a *Schützenhaus*, a theatre, a hotel or a restaurant (Brändle 2007: 201-220).

The press comment of one of these events that took place in mid-1901 in Eisenach at the colonial exhibition was not really favourable, but reflects the prejudice concerning African music, which has been virulent up till today:

> By all means the monotonous screaming and odd singing of these exotics who, besides the dark colour of their flesh, are well proportioned and not at all bad looking, does not manage to fascinate us for long.[2] (Brändle 2007: 39, legend to Abb. 6).

2 Translated by the author.

> *Freilich vermag uns das monotone Geschrei und Gesinge dieser Exoten, die abgesehen von der dunklen Fleischfarbe sich wohlgewachsen und nicht übel präsentieren, nicht lange zu fesseln. (Brändle 2007: 39, legend to Abb. 6).*

To what extent this and similar statements can be found in recent opinions on 'African' music remains speculative, yet might still be heard. It is not easy to overcome the Eurocentric conviction of the superiority of 'Western' musical civilisation.

Some of these early visitors from the colonies stayed and became migrants. The recently published story of Nayo Bruce from Togo is remarkable. His troupe has toured Europe for 20 years, when its leader managed to get rid of their German impresario and to become independent (Brändle 2007). In a Swiss book about him and his family we may recognise, from some of the photographs then taken, some of the instruments used by musicians at the time in this context. Obviously there were drums of different shapes and other percussion instruments, such as rattles (*calabashes* with nets) as well as iron gongs (Brändle 2007: 25, 41).

Another source of information is the well-documented story of a Nubian boy who was presented by the Egyptian Viceroy to the Prussian Prince Albrecht in 1843 (Pieken/Kruse 2007) and became his personal servant. Sabac el Cher´s son Gustav joined the band of the 35th Regiment of Fusiliers in 1885. In 1895, Prinz Heinrich of Prussia, a military musician (Pieken/Kruse 2007: 91), was offered the position of conductor of the band of the 1st Regiment of Grenadiers in Königsberg and moved to Eastern Prussia: "Er wurde zum Star seiner Zeit" [he became the star of his time] (Pieken/Kruse 2007: 103). Later, he left the military and established himself as an independent music conductor.

Tessema Eshete from Ethiopia came to Berlin 1908 to be trained as a car driver and mechanic – along with two more colleagues. By the time he returned, he had recorded 17 shellac discs with BEKA records. But until now, it seems these recordings of songs in Amharic accompanied by himself on the Masinko, a one-sided fiddle of the Azmari (musicians), might ave been unkown to the European, or even Berlin public (www.tessemas.net).

This is exactly what happened over the next hundred years of African music production in Europe: Africans were either recorded here, or the recordings were sent from African countries. The records, audio-cassettes or CDs were produced here technically and then sent back straight away. They did not, and rarely do now, touch the European market. That is why it is very difficult to trace older recordings of African music in Europe. Most of them never left African markets. An exception are the so called 'world music' African musicians. They have decided to serve the European or US

American markets with their music. The CDs they record are intended to be consumed by a European world music loving buyer. This has all sorts of consequences. The music must appeal to the ear, the *Hörgewohnheit* [listening habit] of the Europeans. The arrangements, the mixing, the sound as such, has to fit the *Hörwunsch* [listening wish] of the listeners.

The outer appearance of the recording must also fit the taste of potential buyers. The comments inside the accompanying booklet have to be exhaustive and the lyrics should be transcribed and translated. The aesthetics of the CD cover has to attract the attention of the consumer.

When Günter Gretz sold the distribution rights of the CD on *Ngoma – The early years 1948 to 1960*, the African recordseller in Paris was not at all interested in supplying his clientele, that is, the African Parisian music lovers, with the extensive booklet. Instead, he took the CD cover picture and the list of titles, nothing else.

The French African buyer, it was assumed, would know enough about the music and the text in itself might be seen as patronising. Therefore, the CD sold in Paris was reduced to its essentials: The music.

In many other cases of productions of African music by African producers in Paris, London, or Lisbon, the cover does not really provide a lot of detailed information, often not even the composition of the band or the names of the individual musicians.

If it is missing additional information, this may indicate that this particular production is aimed at the African audience. The typical European intellectual buyer is the opposite: he cherishes the booklet as much as the music.

Günter Gretz and his record label *African music* started at the end of the 1970s with vinyl productions and later continued with CDs. He always tried to put into the cover or booklet as much information as possible. Into the jacket of the 12'' LP, another sheet of printed paper was added (as for example with the LPs pam 02; pam 03; pam 04; pam 05; copam 11), or the inset was printed upon as well. The CD booklets were printed with a lot of pages and text.

The cover designs sometimes stayed within the tradition of African musicians' interest to position themselves as 'been tos', meaning been to London, been to Paris. To prove it, the cover shows them in front of the Tower Bridge (Ebenezer Obey *In London*, DECCA WAPS 28) or with Big Ben in the background (Ebenzer Obey *On the Town,* DECCA WAPS 30), or in front of the Eiffel Tower (Baobab *Baobab à Paris,* Ledoux ASL. 7004).

Günter Gretz's CD on his African music label (pam 404, 1996) of Sona Diabaté, a Guinean living in Paris, shows her in front of the Paris metro station *Europe*. Another CD cover of Günter Gretz features a Parisian *banlieue*: The front cover features Alassane and Doudou (sons of kanté

Fig. 4 – The singer from Guinea (Conakry) Sona Diabate in front of the metro station Europe. Cover of CD pam 404, 1996 designed by Günter Gretz, Frankfurt a. M.

Fig. 5 – The CD featuring the musician Kanté Manfila from Guinea (Conakry). Here the CD cover from 1994 designed by Günter Gretz, Frankfurt a. M.

manfila and Sona Diabeté respectively) at 'la Grande Borne' – a new suburb of Grigny, designed by French architect Emile Aillaud, and built between the years 1967 and 1971 to replace the existing shanty town. (Günter Gretz, pam 402, 1994, note on back cover)

This 'old' tradition from at least the 1950s continued in the visual presentations, music videos or video clips. Wherever produced, it carries the visual characteristics of the particular place or city. The Eiffel Tower or Sacré Cœur belong to its preferred backgrounds. There is a clip in Berlin where Stan Tohon from Benin can be seen in front of the Reichstag (a Pirnaha label production I saw on ARTE years ago).

THE DREAM CITIES

Metropolitan cities are places musicians have always dreamed of. But having tried so hard and spent so much to reach them, an awakening often follows the arrival. After their arrival in Paris, Salif Keita or Mory Kanté experienced hardship. It took them some time to get established and to be recognised for what they were. The current biography tells part of the story, though not all of it by far:

> […] il [Salif Keita] parle du calvaire de l´immigré africain en

> Europe, il s´attaque à une des séquelles les plus caractéristiques de la période postcoloniale, conséquence à la fois de l´échec de bien des gouvernements africains à assurer le bonheur et la liberté à leurs citoyens, de l´exploitation continuelle des anciennes colonies par les puissances occidentales sous le couvert de la coopération, et enfin du racisme suscité chez les Européens par la psychose d´une imaginaire invasion noire et tiers-mondiste. (Keita 2001: 91)

They experienced how difficult it was to enter a market, to compete for the audience to achieve higher sales – and how luck can help, or strange coincidences, as in the case of Mory Kanté. He had recorded the song *Yeke Yeke* several times before. But when, in 1986, a French company chose it as its summer jingle to advertise soft drinks, it became a real hit across Europe.

Indeed, it was one of the few hits by an African artist that managed to top most European charts for some time. It is one of these songs that everybody has heard, but in the end nobody knows who it is by. I have tested this my seminars as often as I could. I have never found a person who at one time or another had not heard *Yeke Yeke*. But hardly anyone knew the singer, composer or even that it was by an African. This may not be something typical for the African musician alone: Many other singers of chart hits are not known by name to the average listener. The title was enough to increase the sales and to make it famous.

The sad thing indeed is that it takes a jingle, an advertisement jingle, to promote a piece of music, instead of the music itself being appreciated by the public. But that is the capitalist economy: It is not the real value that counts but the money you can make out if it. Though that is not all that contributed to the success of *Yeke Yeke*. The record company *Barclay* had asked Nick Patrick to help rework that song and he himself described his contribution in an interview he gave to a journalist of *Le Monde* in 1990:

> Mon travail est de faire en sorte que la musique de Mory soit accessible aux oreilles occidentales. Si on enregistrait toutes les percussions en une seule prise comme les Africains, ce serait un fouillis. C´est pour ca que nous avons eu recours aux ordinateurs, à la technologie des studios. (quoted after Tenaille 2000: 202)

INSTEAD OF A SURVEY

To cover all European countries and to document the presence of African musicians and singers there is really a job that should have been done

regularly by now. But as we cannot rely on any existing survey, I can only provide random examples. Take Spain, for example. There is the duo of the *Hijas del Sol* [Daughers of the Sun] who came from the island of Bioko, the former Fernando Po and its capital Malabo (St. Isabel). They are Bubi and at the beginning they lived off the references to their ethnic origin. Today, they seem to have less interest in cashing in on their ethnic background.[3] Now they seem to live permanently in Madrid. They have separated and no longer perform together.

Being in a Spanish-speaking country, musicians from other Spanish-speaking states from – in this case Cuba – were part of the orchestra.

The late Nigerian musician Bayo Martins (1932–2003) is a typical example of an African musician coming to Germany – in this case because of the Biafran war in Nigeria (1967–1970), who in the end stayed quasi permanently in Germany. Bayo Martins travelled back and forth but became in the long run an African migrant rather than remaining a Nigerian musician. When Bayo Martins first returned to Nigeria with a drum set of his own and the knowledge of a 'been to' he could not really be part of any of the local Nigerian bands under the leadership of an authoritarian band leader any more. Owning one's own instrument gives one an independent status, makes one uncontrollable by the boss, thus no boss would take one on either. Bayo Martins is the founder of the Musicians' Foundation of Nigeria and that has not made him many friends among the bandleaders either. He propagated the introduction of professionalism among musicians in Nigeria by encouraging the granting of basic rights for ordinary musicians (pamphlet Give Musicianship a Chance). Today, the 'band boy' is still without rights and can be pushed around. Bayo Martins remained a solitary artist for the rest of his life, a destiny he shared with many other artists that migrated from Africa – not referring here to his private family status (he was happily married to a German wife and received full support).

Whenever he performed in Germany, he either played the *congas* or his drum set, singing or reciting or accompanying a poetess or poet. He seldom played in a band. Some other singular musicians have set up their network within which they operate, such as the Congolese guitarist Dizzy Mandjeku, who lives in Brussels and takes part whenever Sam Mangwana prepares a tour to Britain, for example, to serve the Congolese community there. Sam Mangwana, who resides in Paris, selects several musicians living

3 Currently Julia Tinjaca is writing a MA thesis and we are already very curious to find out more about these two singers. Paul Seelig and myself did an interview with the sisters after their first appearance on the German world music scene, when they gave a performance at the *Alte Oper* in Frankfurt a. M. http://ntama.uni-mainz.de (accessed 20th February 2009)

in Europe to join him. They rehearse in Brussels before going on tour. Sam Mangwana, a Congolese musician from Angola, belongs to the top selection of African stars globally. Living in Paris (as do his colleagues Mory Kanté, Salif Keita, Mbilia Bell and many others) guarantees an income based on receiving royalty payments for published material. In Africa, this is rarely the case because of piracy and missing legislation or existing legislation that lacks legal enforcement. Presently, the general downfall of CD sales in Europe is posing new problems. The only chance is to perform, and this is one of the areas where African immigrant musicians will have to rely on more in the near future.

Internet sales and purchased downloads will increase and might develop into another source of income. The more the musicians depend on their tours, the more they have to make sure to please the audience. A few years ago, Mory Kanté explained to me in an interview in Darmstadt before a concert at the *Centralstation* (one of the German venues that promotes a lot of music from Africa or generally from the whole world), that he got more requests for his acoustic band than for his electric orchestra. The acoustic variant is a European creation. The underlying attitude is, that 'African' is 'natural' and natural is acoustic. This is obviously complete nonsense, but it is the belief of many so-called 'Afrophiles'. One may consider this a sad development, but the market decides. For Mory Kanté, it is all right. If the audience prefers the acoustic folkloristic version, let it have it. The 'folklorisation' of African popular music has gradually become the trend. When Makeba recorded her first post-Apartheid CD in 1991, *Eyes on Tomorrow*, it was largely criticised for its global rock/pop approach: This was the typical misunderstanding of the outside tabloid! For Makeba, it was a liberty to no longer have to limit herself to folkloristic material! She was liberated from the forced 'African' drill. Now she could play music she liked without the strings of anti-Apartheid, without the strings of the fear of 'betraying' tradition. Poor Miriam Makeba had for years to sing lullabies or other social tunes or cultural markers, like the 'click song'. She constantly had to present herself as a South African, not as a musician first. It is hard life indeed, if you have to live with these strings attached. With the liberation of South Africa she has left behind the prison of alleged 'authenticity'. African musicians living in Europe that have become part of 'club music', such as Tony Allen and Kezaiah Jones, have established themselves quite well. Not so much because of their African origin but because of their music that has been accepted by a certain public.

Born in Lagos 1968, Keziah Jones arrived in England 1977 with his father and brother. In 1992, his first album *Bluefunk Is a Fact* appeared. Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was always his model. In an interview with the famous world music journalist Véronique Mortaigne published in *Le Monde*, he

places himself in a global context: "Y a-t-il un monde musical noir? Sans doute, mais sourtout des héros" (Mortaigne 2003).

The integration of African musicians in this domain is working extremely well. This could be a very positive and optimistic development in Europe: a non-racial approach, one determined by a style of music that is accepted and promoted by the audiences involved.

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